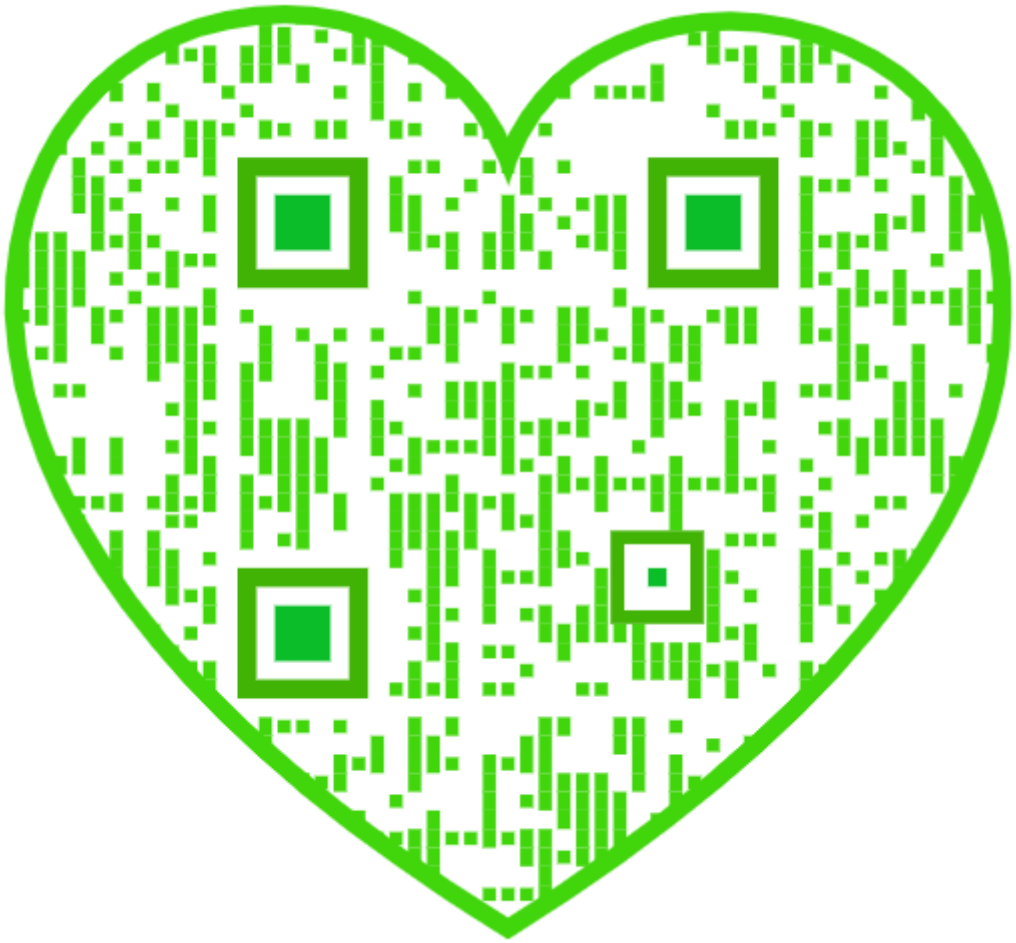

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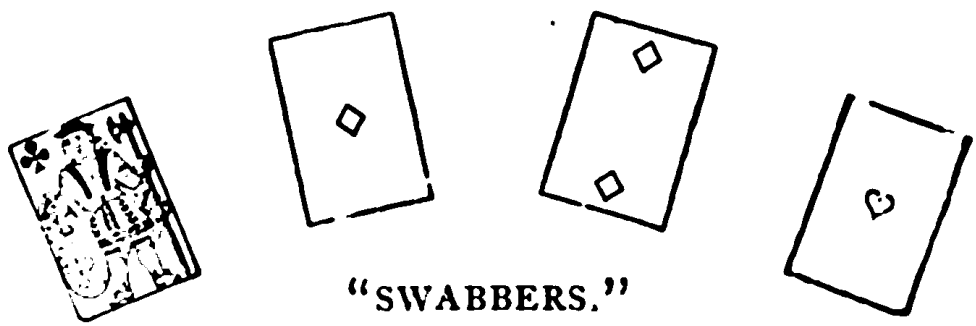
THE HANDS AT WHIST

BY

AQUARIUS

AUTHOR OF

"Games at Cards for Three Players," "Ecarté" "Piquet," "Easy Whist," "Advanced Whist," &c., &c.



"SWABBERS."

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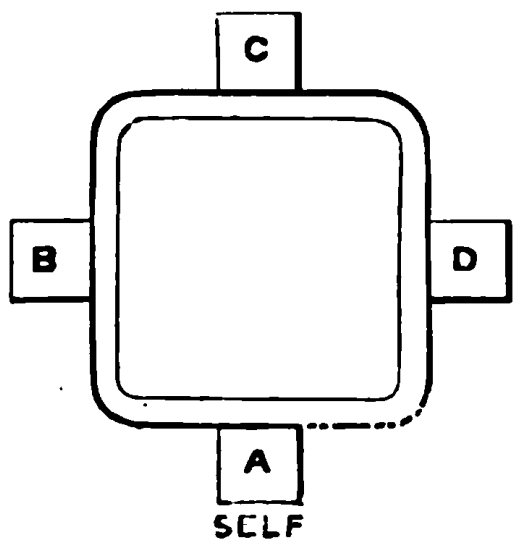

The Hands at Whist.

I.—The Main Principles.

WHIST-PLAYING may be generally divided into three sorts. Beginner's Whist, Good Whist, and Refined Whist.

In the first, the cards are played according to suit, and a few book-rules are blindly applied; in the second, there is rational play and definite aim; in the third, the play is highly skilful, being based on deep study and

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thorough knowledge of intricacies. Much discomfort follows from unequal yoking of players of these different grades.

Presuming an acquaintance with elementary matters obtained through family Whist, the next step is to learn the principles and methods of rational play. The object of this volume is to deal with these briefly.

Good Whist is so far analogous to real Christianity, that there are no absolute rules of action, while the moral obligations are binding and undeviating. However complicated the applications may be, the main principles are very simple; these are:—

1. To play the hands of self and partner to the best effect, sacrificing your own when needful.
2. To waste the opponents' power, thwart their aims, and destroy their opportunities.

The qualities necessary for good play are keen observation, a fair memory, a knowledge of method, and some power of design.

It would be advantageous to remember the fall of every card; but the memory indispensable in Whist retains merely successive remainders and inferences, from trick to trick and from card to card, enabling one to mention at any time how many cards of each suit remain,

where they probably are, and the value of its commanding card; the values of small cards, below the Eight, can thus be neglected, excepting in trumps. Such a Whist memory may be easily acquired; rapidity of inference will grow with practice; the requisite knowledge of method and effect may be aided by reading this book; but the power of design and initiative is an individual quality that cannot be borrowed.

II.—Conventional Habits of Play.

Most of these are based on economy of power, some on preponderance of chances existing under certain conditions; repetition has made them conventional

they thus also serve to convey information inferentially.

In the choice of suit for an opening lead—the lead itself being the least favourable position for a card—one can afford it with most economy in the longest suit held; hence as a broad principle (although there are exceptions) an original lead indicates a long suit.

In choice of the leading card in the long suit of four cards, the lowest is most economic; it indicates that you wish to retain strength, and hence that you possess strength, as well as length, that is power. But when your own powerful suit is longer than four, your partner is less likely to hold any power in it, and

there is no need to press your own economy to the extreme; hence you may then lead the lowest card but one, indicating that your suit contains more than four; or, if you also possess great strength, a winning lead may be preferable.

In leading out your own weak suit of three cards, a high card led will economize your partner's hand in that suit, and will indicate that you do not wish to retain strength in it at the onset; it is thus a conventional lead from weakness.

In an evidently neutral suit, an intermediate card may be used to lead out.

Next, when holding a sequence. The lowest winning card of a head sequence

or head couple (including the ace) is an economic winning lead, and the completed trick apart from under-play informs your partner that you hold the superior cards. The highest card in an upper sequence heading your own powerful suit is a lead economic to your partner, and informs him of the position of the top of that sequence.

Minor sequences and intermediate or detached sequences at the bottom or in the middle of the hand, do not affect the lead, as they can only slightly affect economy.

In playing losing cards to your opponent's lead—that is, when you cannot win the trick, economy induces you to reject

the lowest card you hold of that suit; this is therefore the ordinary habit. If, on the contrary, you then play a needlessly high card, you may induce the opponent on your left to imagine it is your last. and perhaps to lead out trumps with the object of disarming you. Should this device for getting trumps led be unsuccessful, you will naturally in the next round of the same suit reject a card lower than the former, thus rendering your former device unmistakable. The evidence afforded by the two tricks informs your partner that you require him to lead trumps; this, the conventional signal for trumps, is sometimes termed Blue Peter. The repetition of this signal by your

partner in another suit, would also inform you that he holds four trumps, ill-suited for leading; it is termed the Echo.

In discarding for the first time, it is usually economic to throw away a card from your shortest or weakest suit. But if trumps are clearly unfavourable to your side, your aim is then to defend your short suits, and a first discard from your longest suit may then be most economic. Thus you indicate alternatively either weakness or strength.

In trumping a trick, as economy may allow you to use your lowest trump, your partner infers that you retain higher trumps, if any.

Economic play thus acts as a code of

signals. A deceptive device, or *coup*, on the contrary, involves present waste; as, for instance, in the rejection of a needlessly high card, also in holding up, and in under-play, where a trick is purposely lost, to attain future advantage.

The knowledge of economy of risk attending alternative modes of play is partly based on a knowledge of the chances of position of certain winning cards. Some of these chances are easily computed; but the scope of this work forbids entering into this branch of Refined Whist.

Conventional styles of play vary, but the simplest rational style forms the best basis; the rest will develop. Your part-

ner's style will necessarily also affect your own procedure to some extent.

III.—The Location of the Suits.

Apart from the trump suit, there are three long common suits among four players. Out of these at least one is generally deficient in quality, though long, which we will term a neutral suit. Hence there remain two possible long strong suits, the power in which may be anywhere, either friendly or hostile. If hostile, then they are the weak suits of your own side.

For the sake of discrimination in suits according to power, they may be thus termed from the view of your own side:—

1. Powerful.
2. Weak.
3. Neutral.
4. Trump Power.

(*See* Examples, pages 58–61.)

The probable location of the two possible powerful common suits has to be inferred from your own hand, from the opening leads, and from the play in the first few tricks. Some players invariably open from their long suit, or from a powerful suit, if they have one, and clearly distinguish from these their leads of abandonment and chance through-leads; such a method assists in inferences. Out of three suit-openings, one may be a secondary lead in the same hand; and such subsidiary leads may help to show

where there is not power. An immediate return of suit affords similar indications. (See also Leads in IX., Details of Play.)

Eventually your inferences enable you to assign power in suits to the various players; thus—your own or A's known powerful suit, spades; your partner's or C's declared abandonment; your left opponent's or B's powerful suit, hearts; your right opponent's or D's neutral suit with length, diamonds. For positions of A, B, C, D, in the direction of play, A being always yourself, independently of the position of the lead. (See Diagram after the Summary.)

The probable location of the long trump suit, clubs, has also to be inferred,

though perhaps later in the game. Excessive strength or extreme weakness in trumps may be declared by an opening lead. A long-deferred trump-opening generally indicates weakness; but the intermediate states are most often much veiled.

Next, as to the location of the actual cards, kings, knaves, &c., in each suit. The successive inferential process, and the possible alternative positions of the remaining winning cards, enable this to be deduced progressively. At the commencement you know your own cards and the trump card (unless you play the permanent trump-game, where the trump-card of the first deal serves throughout the rubber). In a few rounds, having

located the suits, you distinguish between length and strength, and know the alternative positions of many of the court cards and others. In the latter half of the game you know with certainty where the commanding cards lie. At the end you play simply as with exposed cards.

IV.—The General Aim.

The range of general aim at Whist is comparatively small. The general aim at the onset is most frequently adhered to, when there is sufficient power; otherwise it is modified later in the game. The simplest aims are—

1. To bring in either your own or your partner's powerful suit.

2. To trump with one hand and make with the other alternatively.
3. To establish a sustained cross-ruff.
4. Merely to win the odd trick in any way in a close contest.
5. To make the *early* odd trick with the least risk.
6. To defeat your opponent's attempts to carry out any of the above five aims for themselves.

In No. 1, power and command in trumps are necessary; if this be not in the same hand as the powerful common suit, the means of returning the suit by lead is also necessary. A lead up to the powerful trump hand may also be requisite to ensure perfect success.

In No. 2, the single ruff has to be hit upon, because of the risk in indicating it; the trumping hand then leads out his weak suits for his partner to win two rounds in them, and then return for further ruff (on the principle of a *coup*), as these are his partner's strong suits inferentially. Afterwards the partner's strong trumps are led out singly, drawing two to one. It is an ancient and a risky game requiring persistent boldness, but is sometimes very effective.

In No. 3, the sustained cross-ruff can seldom be reasonably expected even with broken hands; if it can, a lead from a single card is permissible, and the strong suits are then led out, beginning

with the lowest. It is an exceptional game.

In No. 4, the contested parts of the game are the third trick in each suit, and the finish, or eleventh trick and two last. When the strength of your partner is exhausted, any *coup* may be practised, as it then cannot harm his hand.

In No. 5, the state of the score, four points against you, compels such a game. All the tricks have to be made early, trumps led at the beginning in most cases, and winning cards in all suits played out as soon as possible. Above all, no needless risk or finesse. This is beginners' or family Whist of the simplest sort.

In No. 6, corresponding offensive tactics will be easily deduced from the foregoing constructive play.

The following short guide to methods of play, will assist in the detail of carrying out and of thwarting these aims; but the initiative and choice of action must rest with the player.

THE PLAY.

V.—The Powerful Suit on your own side.

The best use of the powerful suit is to establish it or utilize it to the very last card. The next, failing sufficient friendly trump power, is to hold command in it as late as possible, forcing out trumps from the strong hostile hand by means of

winning cards in later rounds of other suits. Concentration of strength being necessary to command in a suit, the partner should not retain any command in it. Last, if the attempt to establish merely just fails, the execution of it constitutes the best management of that suit, both constructively and destructively.

As to the rounds before trumps are out—attempting a third round in a four-card suit is risking about four to one; trying a second round in a six-card suit is nearly as hazardous. But on the advantageous side, it is two to one that the failure will not lie with the opponent whose trump-hand is the weaker of the two. Besides the risk of being trumped,

there is also the chance of leaving your partner incapable of leading your suit back to you after trumps are out; a risk to be remembered.

Perfect utilization will employ every economic method suitable, the advantages of position, of holding in, of finesse, and of keeping your partner well-informed.

As to leads, see Conventional Habits, II., and Discrimination in Leads, IX.

1. Simple economy shows that a high card is more effectively employed in taking another high card than in taking a low one; also that a covering card may be well bestowed.

2. As to position. Tenace is the pincer-grip that two cards in one hand

have on the single card intermediate to them in an opponent's hand. Finesse is the employment of a tenace, using the lower of the two cards, retaining the higher one, and risking the chance of the intermediate one being in the fourth hand: the retained higher card then serves as commanding card for the next trick in that suit.

Your own tenaces are most effective when your partner C leads up to them, and when B, the fourth player, is weak. Your partner's tenaces are most useful when you, A, lead up to them, and when D, the fourth player, is weak.

Finesse may occur in any round, but as the major tenace, ace-queen, is applic-

able in the first round, and requires the original lead to come from elsewhere, such a tenace is a source of weakness (that is, as regards position) in an otherwise powerful hand.

The risk attending finesse is more safely incurred, when trump-power exists as a reserve; sometimes the gain is not worth the risk. A strong hand has more frequently to destroy the opponent's attempts at finesse, than to practise them for themselves.

Similarly, also, an attempt at excessive economy may leave an early trick so unsupported, that if the partner's hand be weak, the opponents may win it very cheaply.

3. As to mutual information. Conventional Habits (see Section II.) will frequently allow your lead to inform your partner whether your suit is of five, of four, or of three cards; the first trick may inform him whether you have led a winning card in a head-sequence, or the top-card of a middle-sequence; if he can take the latter he does so, on the principle of rejecting command in your suit. Yet there is one doubtful point, in the latter case he is not sure about the length of your suit; he will probably presume it is long, but if it is otherwise, merely a three-card suit, it becomes unfortunate.

As third hand, your partner will take tricks in your suit cheaply, and return high cards; having a couple of cards (equal in effect) he will ordinarily take with the lower of the two.

Should your strong suit be led through by your right opponent, D, in the first round, usually play a covering card; in the second round, a king or ace as winning card.

If your left opponent, B, should be indiscreet or unfortunate enough to lead up to your powerful suit, repress any expression of gratitude.

After two rounds, another suit, or trumps, may be led out; but remember that there is a risk in opening each fresh

suit, and that in leading out trumps you might help your opponents.

After the trumps are out, you should hold command in the remaining rounds of your own powerful suit, and may perhaps expect a lead in it from your partner.

These remarks apply to the management of your own powerful suit. Similarly, if you should not possess power, but your partner does, the arrangements are conversely corresponding.

VI.—The Weak Suit.

The Weak Suit, or three-card suit, of your own side treated as the powerful suit of either of your opponents.

A subsidiary lead, or a forcing lead from a weak suit, is generally the highest card held; in special cases it is otherwise.

The methods of destructive play consist in—

1. Leading through the powerful hand, wherever it may be.
2. Destroying any finesse in that hand.
3. Making any possible trick in the suit.
4. Retaining commanding cards in it.
5. Scaring the powerful hand by rejecting a high card.
6. Trumping the suit from a weak trump-hand.

With two very weak suits in one hand, and a powerful one in the partner's, aided by some power in trumps, the single-ruff and make may be kept up alternately (see IV.). With two very weak suits in opposite hands of the same side, the cross-ruff may perhaps be sustained.

VII.—The Neutral Suit.

In this suit, the strength is evenly distributed among the players, the one possessing length having very weak cards, headed by the detached queen or knave,* or all four cards low.

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* The term Jack, for the Scandinavian chief or captain, is historically correct. The term Knave

Such a suit is weak to every player in some respect, being below average in each hand; and when the knowledge of equal distribution does not exist, it must be treated as a weak suit. But if the neutrality of the suit can be inferred, and known from holding the four weak cards in it, an intermediate card, such as a ten, nine, or eight, may be employed for original lead. The partner in distinguishing between your various leads (see IX.), has also to take the intermediate card into account as an original lead. It is a useful lead when you hold two long suits, of which one has an ace-queen and

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is comparatively modern, and abusive; though now fashionable it was a low term about 1720 A.D.

the other is a neutral suit; whence he may infer your ace-queen suit.

The play in the neutral suit is mixed offensive and defensive; the lead in it is a disadvantage as regards the suit itself; a low sequence in it may be useful; and the struggle in it is not necessarily in the third round of it, but may be in any round with equal probability. The thirteenth card becomes directly useful in a strong trump-hand, indirectly so in others.

When the length of two neutral suits occur in the same hand, and on the same side as the long trumps, these may together become equal in effect to a moderately powerful suit.

VIII.—The Trump Suit.

The condition that trumps are not subject to be overridden, renders them more valuable by one or two points than cards of common suits: thus in court-cards a trump queen corresponds to a common king, and so on, as far as regards reserve and finesse. Also, while an ace of any common suit would be usually played not later than the second round, the ace of trumps might be equally effective in the third round. Besides, low trumps have an absolute value, while low plain cards have merely a relative value—that is, when they hold command.

Trumps are safer in finesse, as the economy effected is liable to no risk; and this is one reason for reserve. Also in reserving trumps, one may retain trump-control over hostile powerful suits, without hampering the friendly powerful suit of your partner or yourself. Hence playing out trumps early in the game is consistent only with trump-power, or with some special aim demanding it. As any lead is a comparative loss, the lead in trumps may be advantageously left to the opponents, when power is not great with you.

Trump-power.—It requires six trumps to treat the suit as a common one.

Positive power, or trump-power pro-

perly so called, is anything above a five-card hand of average strength; but forcing power in trumps is not less than five small trumps or a four-card hand of average strength. With trump-power one may lead out trumps safely; with forcing power one is at liberty to force one's partner's presumed weak trumps. But in a pressing game for the *early* odd trick, forcing him is permissible under any circumstances. Also, as it is highly advantageous to draw two hostile trumps for one of your own side, a lead from a single trump is a permissible weak lead.

Playing out Trumps.—The objects in leading out trumps from moderate strength

are necessarily special; to exhaust and clear the way for a powerful suit, to bring in safely commanding cards in the third rounds of any suits, to anticipate a hostile cross-ruff, or to assist in making the *early* odd-trick when the opponent's score is already four.

A lead in trumps is generally a very low card; but if your own strength renders it likely that your partner cannot take the trick, a higher lead is preferable. Having abundant strength, the lowest winning card should be led, as this may achieve the main object, the clearance of the field, and the discovery of the position of the remaining trumps. Remember also that any single trumps already em-

ployed will have reduced the responding power.

The reply in trumps should be immediate under all circumstances; and the trump suit should be persevered with as long as both your opponents can respond. The subsequent play in the long trumps may then require special treatment by single handling, until the command is retained or until the remaining opponent's trumps are entirely exhausted.

Forcing Trumps singly.—A weak trump-hand is economically employed when forced; a strong trump-hand when forced has its command ruined. Hence the usual rule, "Force your partner's weak hand, and your opponent's strong hand."

Trump singly from your own weak hand, but do not allow your own strong hand of trumps to be spoilt; even over-trumping is injudicious at that expense. (For forcing power, see before page 35.)

Provided that the weak trump-hand has no opportunity for trumping singly, it is then best employed in leading or in returning, strengthening leads of high cards to the partner, immediately that this is wanted, especially after his discard.

The weak hand of three and even of four small trumps may be employed in single-ruff (see IV., No. 2), provided that the partner holds winning cards in other suits.

The sustained cross-ruff (IV., No. 3) is suited to three small trumps in each hand.

Effect of the turned-up Trump.—Excepting in the permanent trump-game, the knowledge of the position and value of the trump-card aids in inferences, especially if it be an honour. A lead through an honour may enable the third hand to finesse. A lead up to an honour is designed to fórce it.

Signal for Trumps.—See Conventional Habits (II.) Also, when your partner has taken a trick with the higher one of coupled cards, and returns the lower one, he similarly indicates a wish for your lead in trumps.

In trumps themselves the choice between coupled cards, third in hand, rests with the judgment; the nominal economy of taking with the lower one being overridden by other considerations, it is not conventional in trumps.

IX.—Details of Play.

Original Leads.—Conventional Habits (Section II.) and the general play in suits (Sections V. to VIII.), will, when directed by intention, force the player into certain leads from the suits and cards he may hold. The art of leading well is thus acquired rationally, and then becomes as easy as it is for a workman to pick out the suitable tool from his bag; in neither

of such operations is a code of rules necessary.

But in distinguishing among the leads of others, the probable intentions have to be inferred from the suit and the card led, combined with the knowledge of your own hand. In this light original leads may be thus classified.

1. From a powerful, or merely from a long suit.

2. From the stronger of two weak suits of three cards; or from a neutral suit.

3. From abandonment, indifference, or extreme weakness.

4. Through-leads and forcing-leads, as when your partner C leads through D's strong suit or up to A's suit.

The order in which your partner's lead has been made—whether first, second, third, or fourth, after or before other players, and hence perhaps partly dependent on previous leads—is a matter requiring careful observation. Some knowledge of your partner's proficiency is also useful; never underrate his powers, or base your judgment of them on anything except his actual play.

An independent first lead is usually of type No. 1; but if his long suit be weak either in quality or from tenace, or if his

long suit consist of weak trumps, a first lead of type No. 2 is his next resource; his object may then be merely to make a trick or two in that suit, and leave the remainder of the game to your management. When his first lead is of type No. 3, it is partly shown by his failure on reply, and partly from your own cards and those fallen.

When your partner's original lead has been preceded by another suit-opening, he will probably avoid leads of type No. 2 entirely, and will either follow type No. 1 or type No. 4. Hence any causes for a lead of type No. 4 must be watched, and the advantage of the priority of this lead must be noticed.

Subsidiary leads, made by your partner after his own first original lead, are generally mere suit-openings into which he is forced. But if his first lead was of type (4), his secondary lead may then be of type (1). He should receive the benefit of any doubt in such a matter.

When your partner leads trumps, immediately after winning the first trick in his own suit, he clearly indicates the wish to establish it.

Return of Suit.—The immediate return of trumps is obligatory at any time. The return of your partner's original suit of type (1) is obligatory, but may be deferred; all command in that suit must be abandoned as soon as conveniently pos-

sible. In the interval you may lead out strong trumps or your own powerful suit, or may make one or two moderately safe tricks, or try subsidiary through-leads. Your return in his powerful suit should be with your highest card, whatever number you may hold (Cavendish says otherwise), in order to strengthen him at once. After trumps are out, you lead him a small card in his suit so as to give him the lead.

In other suits you may retain strength and lead small cards in return, as may be advisable.

The Renounce.—The choice between trumping and discarding is subservient to the conditions. If the trick will

probably fall to your partner, or if trumping would spoil your trump-hand, you certainly will discard, except when playing for the *early* odd-trick.

In discarding from your opponent's strong suit, you improve your position for a future renounce in it. In trumping, remember the risk of being over-trumped. Over-trumping from a weak hand of trumps is the best use to be made of it.

Other points to be considered are the contingency of a cross-ruff, and the probability that your partner may require a lead from you in trumps later.

Taking your Partner's Trick.—This is permissible when you urgently require the lead; when you reject command in

your partner's suit, and his low cards can make as well as his higher ones, as with a sequence.

Correspondingly also in order to place a lead, you may under-trump your partner's trick, thus wasting a trump (this *coup* is sometimes called the Grand Coup).

Leading out Twelfth and Thirteenth Cards of a Suit.—The cases differ very much. Your own led thirteenth card may force a trump from D and may compel him to lead some special suit up to your partner C; it may also strengthen C simply through the renounce.

It acts as a trump in your hand, when B, C, and D all trump it. In any case

C exercises his own discretion as to his own play to your thirteenth card.

A commanding twelfth card when led out corresponds, but is most effective when D holds the losing thirteenth card of the suit.

Any occasion for discarding a losing twelfth card should be taken, so that the last device may not take effect on you.

Under-play.—Any unconventional play serving as a device for future advantage may be termed a *coup* (Sec. II.). Of such there are two classes; the commonest being under-play, or designedly losing a trick. It occurs most often in the second round of a suit, or in refusing to over-trump in any round, in order to

control future leads. It is always permissible when you are sure of recovering the lead, bringing in your retained winning card, and leading to your partner's winning card in another suit. The prospect of making the eleventh, twelfth, and thirteenth tricks is the usual incentive.

Deceptive Suit-openings.—Leading from a long suit as from a short one, and leading from the weakest suit as if from power, are *coups* to be employed in an untouched suit near the end of the outplay. The object is to place the future leads. Such devices are good only when applicable to the conditions and object, and are exceptional. With all *coups* the

risk from deceiving your partner has to be met.

The main game risks nothing of that sort with an intelligent partner. Hence, after acquiring the needful knowledge of method, study effect, combine practice with theory, and you will in many cases perceive these devices. In some cases they may be checked by exceptional methods.

X.—Powerful Hands.

For convenience of treatment, the separate suits have been dealt with according to the power in each, and the corresponding economic play explained. Apart from skilful play, whist-power consists evidently inconcentration. In a suit it is a combina-

tion of length and strength of two kinds; in a complete hand it is concentration into one or two powerful suits; in a pair of hands it is the same thing in a larger number of cards, but with the condition that the interests of the two hands are compatible in united play.

It has been shown that much of the success in a powerful suit is due to the support afforded by trump-command in the same pair of hands; also that in the special sorts of game on a different principle, the single ruff, and the cross ruff, can only be sustained successfully, even under favourable conditions, through trump-command up to the end of the out-play. Yet trump-power is not everything in

Whist; it does not entirely represent whist-power.

Excessive trump-power at the extreme might yield seven tricks, which, with four by honours, score eleven points, an arrangement suited to Long-Whist games of ten points; but in ordinary Whist half of such a score, or half the trump-power, is wasted: similarly also when only three honours are held on one side. Thus all games in which excessive trump-power is held on one side are destitute of play; in fact, not worth the trouble of dealing. The evil of this consists in the usual mode of scoring honours at Short Whist having been borrowed from Long Whist without modification; this ill effect of preponder-

ance in honours can be much mitigated by adopting short honours in scoring. (See possible modifications in Section XII.) At Short Whist, long honours should share the fate of the now historic "Swabbers," recorded ornamentally on the title-page of this book.

Ordinarily high trump-power, consisting of eight or nine high trumps on one side, can seldom make more than four or five tricks (unless they are concentrated in one hand); hence with extreme weakness in common suits the odd trick may be lost, and with short honours the game cannot be usually attained at one deal, as three points by tricks would be wanted.

Preponderance in trumps yields two or

three tricks direct in trump rounds, and is thus nearly half the battle; but its effect in trump-command, in controlling hostile powerful suits, and in protecting friendly powerful suits, is more valuable; it also affords the lead necessary for the establishment of the latter. Hence preponderance in trumps is indispensable to a powerful hand or hands, taken collectively by party.

The Powerful Hand.—Assuming this, we may now notice that the powerful common suit of a party is the most powerful suit in either of the two hands, and presuming average strength, is the longer of any two such suits. On the principle that concentration is power, the most powerful hand will, besides holding its share of

trumps necessary to preponderance both by party and by hand, also contain merely a single long suit, being nearly devoid of cards of any other suit.

The powerful party may, however, have the trump preponderance in one hand, and the powerful common suit in the other, provided there are cards in the first hand for return lead. One very powerful suit without trump-command and leading power is ruinous to a hand.

Apart from excessive length in any single common suit, the next most powerful pair of hands would hold, beside trump-command, two moderately long powerful suits of four cards; one in each hand, with connecting cards for sustaining the play.

Two such suits require more comparative strength in each than a single very powerful suit would in order to achieve as much; needing the upper parts of both. Strength of equal degree disseminated among the three common suits is evidently less powerful. Next in order come hands of various degrees of weakness; until at the lowest, the trump-command has nothing to establish, and the power of the two hands is ineffective.

Besides powerful hands and powerful play, there is a third power occasionally used at Whist, which with its antidote is indicated in the following conversation :—

Noticing a youth at a farrier's busily engaged in thumbing some dirty cards, I inquired about the

games he played, and then asked whether he knew Whist. "Aye, I do!" said he; "I loikes Whist, it's a foine game; a narrer table 's good for that." To the next inquiry, as to what style he adopted so as to carry on the conversation of the game, he replied, "Ye kicks with yer roight for diamonds, with your left for hearts, and two for clubs, and spades same way." "Besides all that," I said, "how do you play, what is the signal for trumps?" He answered, "Whoi, ye blows yer nose, acourse? I thought everyone noo that. That's the way they plays it in the clubs o' London, the bishops and rich folk. How do you? Putting up a peg or two, I 'spose? 'Taint no good down here; ye gits one in the oi afore ye can luke round."

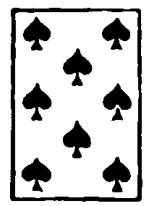
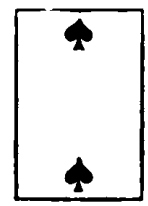
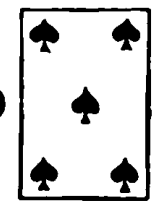
XI.—Examples.

Ex. 1.—*The Powerful Suit in your own* (A's) *hand.*

SPADES.

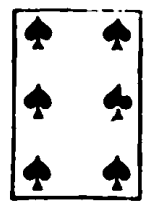
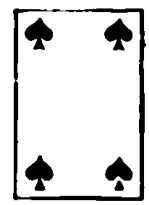
Hands.—A, ace, king, knave, nine, four; B, ten, eight; C, queen, three, two; D, seven, six, five.

First Round.

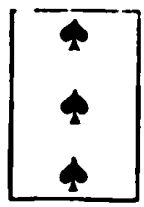
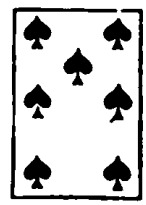
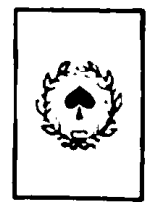
A B  C  D 

Here three rounds of trumps; the third round won by C; thirteenth trump with A.

Second Round.

C D  A  B

Third Round.

C  D  A  B discards.

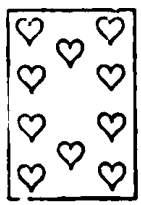
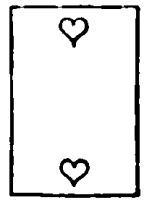
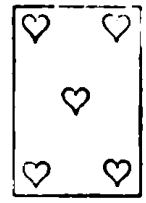
Thus A and C win three tricks in this suit, and A holds two remaining winning cards, the knave and the nine.

Ex. 2.—*The Weak Suit* (*power with* B).

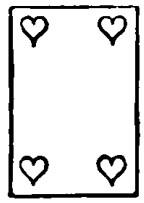
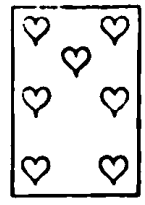
HEARTS.

Hands.—A, ten, nine, eight, seven; B, ace, king, queen, six, three; C, four, two; D, knave, five.

First Round.

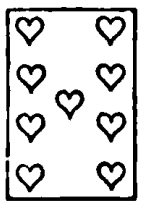
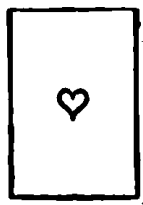
A  B C  D 

Second Round.

B C  D A 

Here B leads out trumps, and is stopped in their first round by A.

Third Round.

A  B  C High trump. D discards.

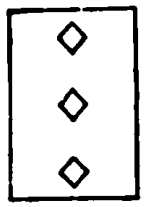
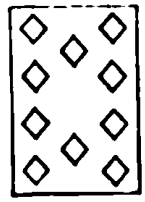
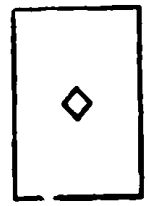
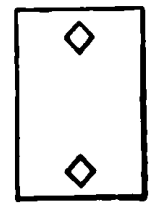
Thus B and D win only two tricks in their own powerful suit; while A retains command afterwards with the eight, while B holds the six and the three.

Ex. 3.—*The Neutral Suit* (*length with* D).

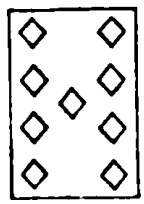
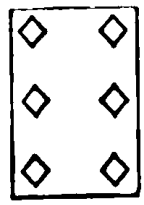
DIAMONDS.

Hands.—A, queen, ten, seven; B, ace, nine, eight; C, king, six, two; D, knave, five, four, three.

First Round.

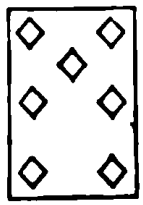
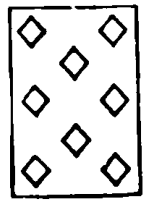
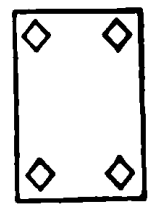
D  A  B  C 

Second Round.

B  C  D A

Here a change to another suit occurs, afterwards A regains the lead,

Third Round.

A  B  C D 

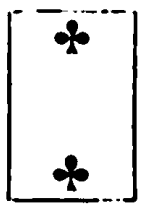
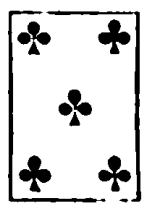
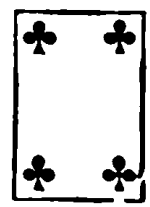
Here A and C have made two tricks out of three, and D is left with the thirteenth card, the five.

Ex. 4.—*The Trump Suit (length with* A).

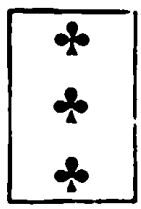
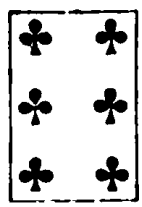
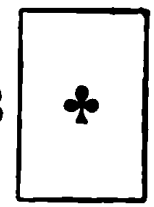
CLUBS.

Hands.—A, king, nine, eight, seven, two; B, ace, ten, five; C, queen, knave, three; D, six, four.

First Round.

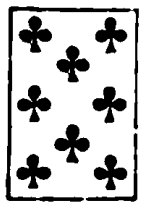
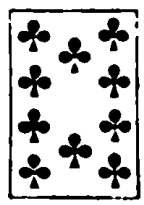
A  B  C D 

Second Round.

C  D  A B 

A change to another suit occurs here, afterwards—

Third Round.

A  B  C D discards.

Here A and C make two tricks out of three, and A remains with the nine and the seven as commanding long trumps.

XII.—THE LAWS OF THE GAME.

The Score.—A game consists of five points, won through tricks or honours, or both: a game at Long Whist consists of ten points. Each trick won in excess of six, and each honour held in excess of the opponents' honours scores one point; excepting, that when a score is already four, honours do not count on that side. Penalty-points precede trick-points. A score declared, receiving tacit assent and correctly marked, holds good.

A game made against a blank score is a Treble; against a score of either one or two points it is a Double; and against either three or four points it is a Single. Winning the Rubber is winning two games out of three, although the third may not be played. Intervals of rest and changes take place after each rubber. Rubber-points are thus counted: one for a Single, two for a Double, three for a Treble; and two extra for winning the Rubber. A Bumper is eight Rubber-points.

Penalties.—The penalty for a misdeal is the loss of the deal: but the deal holds after one trick is played. Every player that plays with an incorrect hand accepts all consequences.

Wrong uncovered leads, cards played out of turn and recovered, and incomplete withdrawn revokes, are simply special cases of exposed cards. An exposed card must be named, and if suitably called must be played.

For each proved revoke, or for false information rendered by you, the penalty is (1) you cannot win the game in that deal; (2) Three tricks are handed over to the opponents. Failing three tricks, then three points are deducted from your score; and failing three points in your score, the opponents may then simply add three points to their own score. A pair of revokes on opposite sides counterbalance, but the game cannot be then won by either side. A revoke is irrecoverable when the next trick is led.

In any difficulty, two partners may not privately consult; the statement of either is binding on both.

Permissible Information.—Asking the state of the score on either side and calling attention to it. Asking players to draw their cards in the current trick, and asking to see the last trick. Also asking the dealer "Which is the trump-suit?"

When your score is already three points, and you hold two honours, you may ask your partner,

"Have you an honour?" At any time you may ask him, "Shall we throw down our hands?"

An actual throw-down is irrevocable exposure, whether due to abandonment, or to a sure claim, either for tricks or honours.

All such information is utilized, but explanations about the game must not be made during play.

Possible Modifications.—In the permanent trump-game, the trump of the first deal serves for the whole rubber, and there are no cards turned up in the subsequent deals. With Short-honours, three honours on one side count as one point; four honours as two points.

Bystanders are not authorities for laws of the game, but are appealed to merely as witnesses of facts and statements, or for opinion; but not necessarily as arbitrators.

THE END.

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